

Whispers

Reading Orwell's "Shooting An Elephant" helped me to remember about many decisions I have made, including a decision I made on a warm senior day of high school during lunch. "Shooting An Elephant" is ingeniously linked to everyday life. Orwell writes about his experiences as a political intruder in a western country, how it affected his life, and how these people influenced him to kill an elephant. My decisions are often based on the same subliminal whispers Orwell heard when he was marching to keep the peace. More times than not, for good or bad, my decisions are frequently made with the same forces acting upon me.

During my last year of high school I had a most interesting and distasteful incident relating to Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant," which started as much as a year before graduation. Every day my friends and I sat at the same table during our lunch break, which was nothing unusual. It was not extraordinary for extraordinary things to happen in our part of the campus, wherever that may be. The table we sat at happened to be smack in the middle of the lunch area, oftentimes becoming entertainment or speculation for fellow students. My friends might do anything from standing on top of the table and stripping their clothes off to jumping in a near-by garbage can. None-the-less I tried to stay away from such oddities and keep an observatory posture, which in turn happens to be what Orwell would have preferred. All of these maniacal actions undoubtedly spawned from good old peer pressure, or the natives watching us, expecting such activities.

In the center of our table was a hole, no one knows for sure why, maybe it was for a big umbrella to keep the sun and rain out, but now there was a whole a little bigger than a quarter. I don't know who started it or when, but for at least a whole school year people sitting at the table would put any biodegradable substance they could find in the hole. Everything from mayonnaise, to scabs, to bugs was shoved down that hole. Finally one day the hole filled up and we didn't have anything to do with the mixture, so someone suggesting taking a bite of it. This suggestion came up more often over the next few weeks, peer pressure rose, and so did the money involved with carrying out the act. So finally I decided to partake in this noxious mixture. For twenty bucks, and more importantly the glory of it all, I took a bite. I tried but I couldn't swallow, in fact I didn't even have the chance because gages overruled everything except for spewing a liquid cloud of juice. I "shot the elephant," and regretted it, but the money helped to justify what I did.

"Should I do it or should I not? I could blow it if I do what I think. What would people think? What do I get out of this?" These are all questions I ask when making my decision's. Orwell asked himself these same questions, but being strong turned out to be his biggest weakness, as it did mine. It's almost like masculine pride. Orwell's was explained by imperialism, and mine, foolishness.

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